

Reply-To: <lipman@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>  
From: "David Lipman" <lipman@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>  
To: <Harold\_Varmus@nih.gov>  
Subject: RE:  
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Harold,

I gave it a quick reading and it's quite exciting to see this take shape. Though you are proposing bold changes, the tone of the article and the plans indicate a careful and cautious approach. I wonder whether this will be taken by some as so tentative that the whole thing can be stopped? Somehow, I think it has to be made clear that there will be some path forward here, but one informed by a wide range of input from the community.

A couple of minor points:

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e our proposal cannot eliminate all of the costs associated with scientific publishing, movement to an electronic format is likely to reduce "production" costs by at least 70 percent. Furthermore, E-biomed would likely have an additional powerful effect on costs by reducing or eliminating the profits currently earned some publishers.

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This comes across as if you are directly attacking the commercial publishers (though even JBC gets close to 50% margin...). Of course, even without this, it is implied so perhaps this last statement is unnecessary. Also - how would you deal with the claim by commercial publishers that by doing this (even if by contract) the government is entering into competition with the private sector? I think the response to that has to be that you are proposing something qualitatively different because open access changes everything.

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The E-biomed repository might also serve as a communal site for posting notices of meetings and job opportunities; for providing synopses---or even full texts with illustrations---of talks presented at scientific symposia; and for engaging in world-wide discussions of a variety of scientific and political issues.

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I would avoid the job posting side of this - that is something the commercial and society guys love and it's not necessary. The rest is more closely associated with primary publication and that's where the focus should be.

) But it is good,  
and centralised  
And go forward